

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Favorable reconsideration of this application as presently amended and in light of the following discussion is respectfully requested.

Claims 1, 2, 17 and 21-25 are pending in the present application. Claims 1 and 2 have been withdrawn by the Examiner, Claim 18 has been canceled and Claims 17, 21 and 23-25 have been amended by the present amendment.

In the outstanding Office Action, the specification was objected to; Claims 17-25 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, first paragraph; Claims 17, 18 and 21-25 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph; and Claims 17, 18 and 21-24 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as anticipated by Burns (U.S. Patent 5,850,773).

The abstract has been amended to better reflect the claimed invention. Further, the specification has been amended for clarification. In particular, as described at page 4, lines 7-14 in the original specification, lowering of the speed of the movement of the cutting blade was performed by the speed reduction part. To achieve lowering of the speed of the movement of the cutting blade ("lowered" as compared to related art configurations in which the blade accelerated beyond the center of the optical fiber), an amount of a drive force that is applied to the cutting blade is reduced by the speed reduction part (see also specification, page 3, line 25 to, page 4, line 6 and page 5, lines 5-12) to achieve an almost constant speed (see page 4, line 21). No new matter is added thereby.

With regard to the objection to the specification under 37 C.F.R. § 1.71 and the rejection of Claims 17-25 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, first paragraph, Claims 17, 21 and 23-25 find support at page 4, lines 7-14, at page 5, lines 5-12 and at page 8, lines 8-14. For example, an acceleration of a cutting blade is prevented after the cutting blade transits a center of an optical fiber by reducing an amount of a drive force applied to the cutting blade to achieve a substantially constant speed of the cutting blade. The reduction of the amount of

the applied drive force is performed by, i.e. speed reduction gears. Accordingly, it is respectfully requested this rejection be withdrawn.

With regard to the rejection of Claims 17, 18 and 21-25 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, Claims 17, 21 and 23-25 have been amended to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter regarded as the claimed invention. Specifically, an amount of a drive force applied to a cutting blade is reduced to move the cutting blade at a constant speed (preventing acceleration). Further, the drive force is applied to a cutting blade holder that holds a cutting blade from a drive speed reduction device (speed reduction gears) through a drive force transmission device (cam, cam follower) to move the cutting blade. Furthermore, Claims 17 and 25 have been amended such that the stopping step of Claim 25 further limits the stopping step of Claim 17. Accordingly, it is respectfully requested this rejection be withdrawn.

Claims 17 and 21-24 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as anticipated by Burns. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Amended Claim 17 is directed to a method for cutting an optical fiber that includes *inter alia* reducing an amount of a drive force applied to a cutting blade after the cutting blade transits a center of the optical fiber by a drive speed reduction device to move the cutting blade at a constant speed.

By providing such a method for cutting an optical fiber, a cleaving of an end surface of a cut optical fiber can be prevented and a stress on a cutting blade during cutting can be reduced (see specification, page 4, lines 7-11).

In contrast to Claim 17 of the present application, Burn discloses that a clutch 28 is automatically engaged and acts to turn a shaft 29 through one revolution to oscillate a cutter 20 downwardly into cutting engagement with a wire 11 and then to retract the cutter 20 upwardly out of the path of the wire 11, and that the clutch 28 is automatically disengaged at

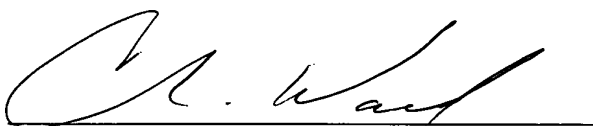
the end of one revolution of the clutch 28 (see column 3, lines 36-45). Burn also discloses that the cutter 20 must be advanced and retracted at a rapid rate (see column 3, lines 45-46). Further, Burn discloses the cutter 20 traveling half way through its cutting stroke and the cutter 20, while maintaining at a substantially constant attitude, is moved to the end of its cutting stroke (see column 4, line 65 to, column 5, line 24). However, Burn does not disclose or suggest that an amount of a drive force applied to the cutter 20 is reduced after the cutter 20 has traveled half way through its cutting stroke to move the cutter 20 at a constant speed. Furthermore, Burn neither discloses nor suggests the features recited in Claim 25 of the present application.

Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that independent Claim 17 and each of the claims depending therefrom define over Burn.

In view of the above discussion and the present amendment, Applicants respectfully submit that the present application is believed to be in condition for allowance, and an early action favorable to that effect is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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